



the Spalding NEWS

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Spalding Education
INTERNATIONAL

Teacher Preparation & Professional Development

Observers of the education scene will note that more attention is being focused on the quality of teacher preparation and professional development. It would be comforting to think that at least part of the impetus for that attention is the startling divergence between education schools' reading curriculum and what the National Reading Panel, (and Reading First legislation), identified as scientifically-based instruction essential to successful reading instruction.

Some may recall a 2006 study by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) entitled *What Education Schools Aren't Teaching About Reading and What Elementary Teachers Aren't Learning*. The study (reviewed in *Spalding News* Volume 21 Issue 3) revealed that a large majority of education schools were not teaching the science of reading.

[NCTQ State Teacher Policy Yearbook](#)

It is possible that more do so now, but the 2009 NCTQ annual review of state laws, rules and regulations that govern the teaching profession finds state oversight of teacher preparation programs poor, and in need of significant reform for improvement to occur. These conclusions were derived from an evaluation of every state in the areas of teacher preparation, evaluation, alternative certification and compensation.

NCTQ state ratings were based, in part, upon whether states require teacher-training programs to fully address the

science of reading and whether new teachers are required to pass a rigorous test in the science of reading to obtain licensure.

As a gauge of what states consider important, the findings are not encouraging. Twenty-four states do not require scientific reading instruction. Six states "nearly met that goal," two states met the goal, and three states were designated Best Practice States. Arizona was found to meet "a small part of the goal."*

(*AZ does require elementary teachers to complete 45 clock hours or three credit hours of instruction in "research-based systematic phonics" during their first two years of teaching to obtain a standard teaching certificate.)

Only 5 states test new teachers' knowledge of the science of reading; 10 test inadequately; and 36, Arizona among them, do not test teachers' knowledge of the science of reading "prior to certification or at any point thereafter." [NSDC Professional Learning in the Learning Profession](#)

Another 2009 report, this one from the National Staff Development Council, reviewed research on professional development and concluded: "The episodic and fragmented approach of traditional professional development does not afford the time necessary for learning that is 'rigorous' and 'cumulative'."

(Continued on page 2)

Teacher Preparation & ... (Cont.)

The data indicate that the intensity and duration of professional development offered to U.S. teachers “is not at the level research suggests is necessary to have noticeable impacts on instruction and student learning. While many teachers get a day or two of professional development on various topics, very few have the chance to study any aspect of teaching for more than two days. This means most of their professional learning opportunities do not meet the threshold needed for strong effects on practice or student learning.”

What needs to be done

According to the research, the content of professional development is most useful when it focuses on “concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation and reflection rather than abstract discussions of teaching. Studies find strong effects of professional development on practice when it focuses on enhancing teachers’ knowledge of how to engage in specific pedagogical skills and how to teach specific kinds of content to learners. Equally important is a focus on student learning, including analysis of the conceptual understanding and skills that students will be expected to demonstrate.”

In addition, the report found, “Student achievement improved most when teachers were engaged in sustained, collaborative professional development that specifically focused on deepening teachers’ content knowledge and instructional practices. Secondly, professional development that is sustained and intense has a greater chance of transforming teaching practices and student learning.”

In a review of the literature on coaching, the report cited several comparison group studies that suggest that “teachers who receive coaching are more likely to enact the desired teaching practices and apply them more appropriately than those receiving more traditional professional development” and that “collegial, job-embedded models of support appeared

to have more effect on practice than traditional workshop models of training.”

The case for reform

The NCTQ report finds that states are remiss in not requiring the science of reading be taught in teacher preparation programs and a general need for more academic rigor. NSDC finds that same lack of rigor in most professional development programs. As a consequence, teachers often lack the skills and knowledge required for the difficult work of educating the nation's young.

What SEI has done


All of which explains, at least in part, the findings of the third year of the four-year evaluation of WRTR conducted by Arizona State University. (Please see *The Year Three Report: Evaluation Study of The Writing Road to Reading* on page 3.)

Discussing Spalding students' consistently higher scores compared to the control group since the inception of the study, the researchers observed, “After the National Reading Panel Report in 2000, most publishers hastened to add the five reading research-based components. Since both the control groups and the experimental (Spalding) groups used detailed teacher guides evaluated by NCLB for the reading research components, they should produce similar results. One major difference between the teacher programs, however, is in the training. The teacher methodology in the experimental groups differed from that of the control groups because it requires more hours (45 compared to an average of 25).”

Researchers also found that “compared to control-group teachers, experimental teachers were required to devote a greater number of hours preparing to teach the reading method. Experimental teachers were required to work on the integration of the language arts skills with consistent delivery of sequential, explicit instruction.”

In short, the content missing from many

teacher preparation programs cannot be acquired in “a day or two of professional development on various topics.”

Intense course work in the science of reading provided in WRTR courses makes up for that deficit. To positively affect student achievement, teachers need in-depth knowledge of the science of reading. They need to know how to convey specific skills and how to fulfill the needs of varied learners or, to borrow a phrase from WRTR, “Student achievement is enhanced when teachers’ professional decisions are based on a thorough understanding of the content, sound principles of learning and instruction, and sensitivity to the student and the situation.”

The Spalding News

In 1986, Romalda B. Spalding established the Spalding Education Foundation (now Spalding Education International, or SEI) to perpetuate her Method, and to maintain the principles and procedures which have made *The Spalding Method* so effective.

Through ongoing professional development, SEI provides the highest quality literacy instruction to public, private and home educators, and ultimately to all students. Today, SEI trains teachers and accredits schools in *The Spalding Method*, which continues to be validated by current research about the way children learn.

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ASU Longitudinal Research Study - Year 3



For the last two years *Spalding News* has published the findings of the Arizona State University Evaluation study of *The Writing Road to Reading* (WRTR). Results from the 2008-2009 school year are now in. For new readers unfamiliar with prior reports, this is the third year of a four-year study designed to determine whether Spalding-taught students demonstrate statistically significant learning gains and how those gains compare to the progress of children in control schools using other core reading programs.

Schools were matched on socioeconomic status, class size, race/ethnicity, gender, and geography. How well teachers implement the WRTR program is a companion research question. Because of space limitations, *Spalding News* will excerpt only the portions of the report dealing with students' learning.

Participants

"This study was conducted in 11 diverse Arizona schools with a total of 991 participating second-grade students at the first benchmark test, and increasing slightly to 996 total students by the year-end test. The experimental students can be further separated into two groups: the first group includes those students who were also in the kindergarten study (total of 351 at year-end), and the second group was all students in the grade level (540 at year end or 189 new experimental students by year-end)."

Other Core Reading Programs

"According to control teacher questionnaires, all second-grade control schools used either the Houghton or Harcourt reading program. These programs were evaluated by the Arizona Department of Education as core reading programs under Reading First. Control teachers received from 2 to 5 hours of inservice training on these publishers' materials."

Measures

Student performance was measured on the following Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) areas: Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF), Word Use Fluency (WUF), Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), and Retell Fluency (RTF).

Results

"Table 3 below displays the comparative performance of the Spalding and the control students on the DIBELS that were administered in the Fall of 2008, Winter, and Spring of 2009." (The Longitudinal Group is made up of those students who have participated in the study since Year 1.)

Table 3: Comparative Mean Scores of Spalding and Control Second-Grade Students on the DIBELS (Fall 2008, Winter & Spring, 2009)

		Experimental	Longitudinal Group	Control	Difference
Fall, 2008	NWF	84.88*	87.05	67.27	17.61
	WUF	44.50*	44.90	32.59	11.91
	ORF	73.63*	77.06	49.71	23.92
	RTF	28.59*	29.74	15.42	13.17
Winter, 2009	ORF	98.59*	101.65	66.33	32.26
	RTF	38.72	41.09	25.39	13.33
Spring, 2009	ORF	109.96**	111.17	87.48	22.48
	RTF	44.83**	45.82	33.47	11.36

*p<.05

**p<.01

"Similar to last year, Spalding students had consistently higher mean values on all DIBELS areas, which provides preliminary evidence that Spalding has been more effective than other methods used in the control schools in teaching those reading skills. The students who have participated in the study since Year 1 have scores that are higher than or equal to the overall experimental students."

(Continued on page 4)

ASU Study (Cont.)

Effect Size

In addition to measures of statistical significance, educators need to know whether a statistically-significant difference will have a meaningful effect on student achievement. Therefore, after researchers made an additional comparison, they state that converting the score to percentiles, “would mean the average student in the Spalding sample, at the end of the year, would score higher than 73% of the control sample.” See complete study on www.spalding.org. Click on research, then Year 3 Study.

Dibels Bench Marks

“As shown in Table 4 below, additional analyses of the extent to which experimental students experienced learning gains by the end of second grade as well as between the beginning and the middle of the school year show that they exceeded the DIBELS decision rules benchmarks for achievement at each testing period.”

Table 4: Second-grade Students’ Mean Post-Scores on DIBELS

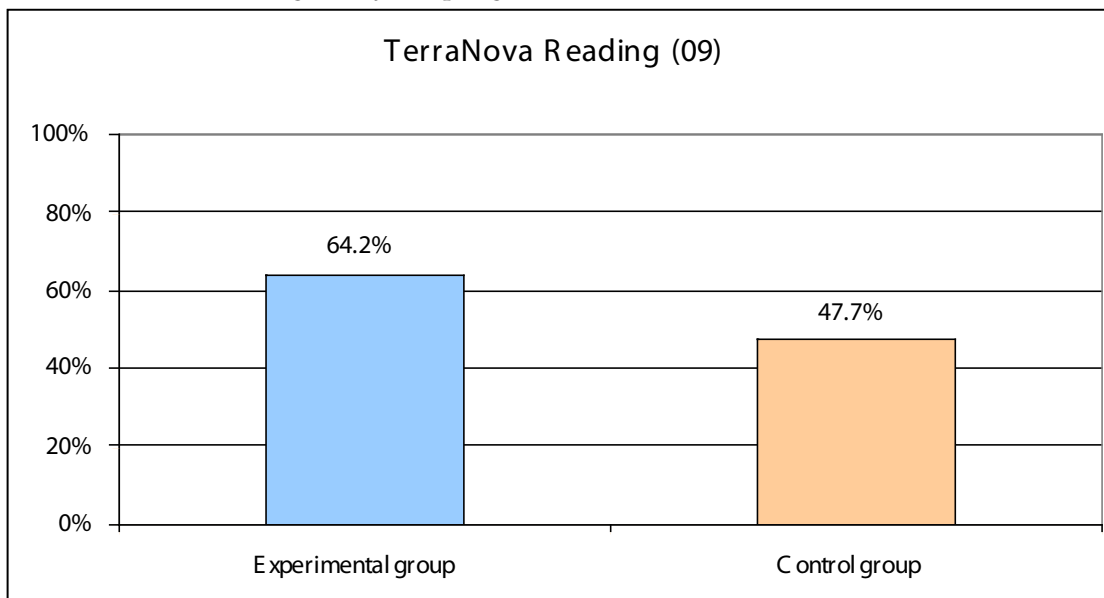
		Mean Test Scores			DIBELS End of Second-grade Low risk score
		Spalding Experimental Schools	Spalding Longitudinal Group	Control Schools	
		(n = 512)	(n = 363)	(n = 439)	
Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)					
	Spring test	109.96	111.17	87.48	90

“As can be seen, Spalding participants experienced significant gains in reading performance from the beginning, to the middle and end of the school year. Unfortunately, by the middle and ending benchmarks in second grade, the average control student is not meeting the DIBELS assessment for low-risk scores.”

TerraNova Reading Comprehension

“Another analysis of reading achievement was available in this year’s study because all second-grade students are required to complete the state’s norm-referenced achievement test, TerraNova. The chart below represents a sample of the study students (three control and three experimental schools) and their average NCE score on the TerraNova reading portion. As would be expected from reviewing the DIBELS scores, the Spalding students’ NCE scores were significantly higher than the control students on the state test ($p < .01$).”

Chart 1: Student NCE reading scores from Spring, 09 AZ TerraNova exam



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Summary

“According to the year three results, students who used *The Writing Road to Reading* continue to demonstrate statistically significant learning gains as measured by DIBELS. In addition, their scores were significantly higher than control group student scores again this year. Since both the control groups and the experimental groups used detailed teacher guides evaluated by NCLB for research-based reading components, theoretically, they should have produced similar results. This was not the case. These preliminary findings are strongly suggesting that use of *The Writing Road to Reading* curriculum is an effective method for enhancing performance on critical early literacy skills.”

Making a Difference -The Spalding Way

The lead article in this issue of *Spalding News* discusses two reports. (See pages 1 and 2.) The first report reveals a large gap between most states' requirements for teacher preparation and what research shows to be essential teacher knowledge. The second shows a disparity between what research identifies as effective professional development and what most teachers experience.

Yet, quality of instruction has more to do with student achievement than any other factor within a school's control. That is especially true of reading instruction because as one researcher put it, "Teaching reading *is* rocket science" and requires much specialized knowledge on the part of

the teacher.

The lack of scientifically-based reading curriculum in most colleges of education makes the content and duration of professional development especially important. The schools listed below demonstrate that knowledgeable teachers make a difference.*

All schools listed below have provided their teachers with Spalding courses including follow-up on-site support.

Some are already Spalding Accredited. That means they have at least one Certified Spalding teacher at every grade level and a Spalding Certified Teacher Instructor (SCTI) on staff to provide on-site support.

**These achievement designations are from AZ Learns, the accountability system developed by the Arizona Department of Education. They are based largely on the percentage of students passing the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) during the current year and growth over time. Schools are also credited for increasing the percentage of English Language Learners who move into regular programs.*

A complete list of AZ schools and additional information about AZ Learns is available on the Department web site. <http://www.azed.gov/azlearns/azlearns.asp>

School Name

Alhambra Traditional School
 Benjamin Franklin Charter School - Gilbert
 Chandler Traditional Academy - Independence
 Chandler Traditional Academy - Liberty Campus
 Chandler Traditional Campus-Freedom
 Cheyenne Traditional Elementary School
 Franklin Elementary School
 Franklin Northeast School
 Franklin South
 Franklin West Elementary
 GPS Traditional Academy
 Valley Academy
 Vista Del Sur Traditional School
 Benjamin Franklin Charter School - Mesa
 Benjamin Franklin Charter School - Power
 Benjamin Franklin Charter School - Queen Creek
 Gallego Basic Elementary School
 Legacy Traditional School

City

Phoenix
 Gilbert
 Chandler
 Chandler
 Gilbert
 Scottsdale
 Mesa
 Mesa
 Mesa
 Mesa
 Gilbert
 Phoenix
 Laveen
 Mesa
 Gilbert
 Queen Creek
 Tucson
 Maricopa

Achievement

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Spalding Accredited

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Dreams Can Come True (And Nagging Helps, Too!)

by Christine Day

Chatsworth State School in Queensland is a small school with about 220 students from Prep to Year 7. (Prep is roughly equivalent to US kindergarten for students ranging in age from 4.5 to 5.5 years of age depending upon their birth months.) Our school is situated in a semi-rural area and has been identified as having low socio-economic status.

I started working at Chatsworth School in 2007 as Prep/Year 1 teacher. (Year 1 for 6 & 7 year olds would be similar to US first grade.) During the latter part of 2007 a casual conversation about the majority of students having low literacy levels, and ways to address the problem, prompted me to do some internet research. I came across the Spalding International web site and knew instinctively that this could well be the method we needed at our school.

I attended ILA 1 (Integrated Language Arts 1) training in Brisbane during the January 2008 vacation period and I was hooked! I knew that *The Writing Road to Reading* held the answers to our problem.

I was asked to speak at a staff meeting about the course at the beginning of the school year (late January) and as expected, there was no interest: "We have a phonics program already" and so on.

The Year 2 teacher spoke to me after the meeting and said she would like to know more. (Year 2 for 7- 8 year olds would be similar to US second grade.) As I was only working half time that year, I asked her if

I could introduce *The Method* to her class on a voluntary basis on the 5 days per fortnight that I had free. She agreed. We discussed our intentions with the Principal, who also agreed to a trial of *The Method*, and so our exciting journey began. Was anyone else interested? No!!

The Year 2 teacher was very supportive and was brave enough to allow me a free reign with her class. We were heading towards the Year 2 diagnostic net testing (in May) which identifies children who are falling below grade level or are likely to do so. The net test is used throughout the district. Students falling behind their peers



Prep class making line and clock letters

are allocated time with a teacher's aide to bring them up to grade level.

Typically, we had around 86% of children recognized as failing. As we had only implemented *The Spalding Method* on a part-time basis in the Year 2 class, we held our breath as May came around. The Year 2 teacher was now on Maternity Leave so we had a new teacher in the class and independent teachers attending to the diagnostic net procedure.



WOW!! This time 86% of children WERE NOT identified as falling below grade level. Was anyone else interested now? Yes!!

As the Year 2 net also looks at Numeracy levels, we were able to show that the Numeracy levels were consistent with previous years which meant that our results in Literacy would also have been consistent if not for WRTR. So it wasn't that we had been blessed with a brighter group of students.

Other teachers became interested and asked if I could work in their classes also. I continued to nag about the importance of implementing *The Writing Road to Reading* across the whole school and the importance of ILA 1 training for all the teachers.

My dream was to have all teachers trained at the same time in our local area. This is difficult to achieve in a small State School due to the teachers having to give up the

whole of their vacation break, as well as the cost of training on an already very, very tight budget.

I am happy to report that dreams sometimes do come true and nagging sometimes works!! In July vacation 2009, 10 staff from our school and a few other interested participants attended an ILA 1 course located at our school.

Our wonderful instructor, Jacquie Paix also gave up her vacation to come to our

(Continued on page 8)



Q How do you plan Spalding lessons for a multi-age classroom?

A As in any classroom, you would plan to differentiate instruction to meet all learners needs. Use high-quality language arts curricula from the Spalding Scope and Sequence and *Teacher's Guide* lesson plans. Following the Delivering section of the *Teacher's Guide*, teach the objectives in whole group first to provide explicit, interactive, and diagnostic instruction. In whole group, ask more challenging questions of students in the older grades. Asking both basic and higher-level questions will yield information you need to differentiate instruction.

Once you know which students need additional instruction, provide individual or small-group instruction. Keep in mind that these small groups should be flexible (different sizes, different students, number of days, and type of structure) because children have difficulty with different skills. Use the information drawn from student data and observations as the criteria for grouping them. Then provide ample practice for students having difficulty and challenge for students who learned the skill or concepts after the first model in whole group.

Q If my students in fifth or sixth grade had Spalding in prior years, how often do I need to do OPR/WPR and assess them on the phonograms?

A Assess all students at the beginning of the year on phonograms making sure they pronounce

the phonogram sounds precisely and write them correctly. Correct any mispronunciations and incorrect letter formations, and practice those that the students missed. Once students are automatic in saying and writing the phonograms precisely and accurately, provide practice as needed for assessing them monthly to maintain that knowledge. Older students do not need frequent practice with the phonograms once they are learned. It is boring, repetitive, and dull to practice anything that students have achieved to the automatic level.

Q How do I use a *McCall-Crabbs* passage to test comprehension? Do I accumulate the Grade Equivalent scores or raw scores and what does that tell me about their comprehension level?

A *McCall-Crabbs* passages are not organized sequentially by level of difficulty or by text types. Therefore, follow the suggested sequence and the passages identified in the *Teacher's Guide* for teaching text structure and the mental actions. Use raw scores instead of grade-equivalent scores to obtain a base line for pre- and post- testing and monitor each student's progress throughout the year. Raw scores are easily converted to percentages (e.g., 8 out of 10 correct equals 80%) that can be used as report

card grades. (The grade equivalencies and percentile ranks are not equal intervals, and therefore cannot be averaged. For example, one more point correct may result in a grade-equivalent score of 6 to 12 months higher.) For additional information on assessing comprehension, use *The Comprehension Connection User's Guide for McCall-Harby/Crabbs Book A*, pages 31 and 32 or *User's Guide for McCall-Crabbs Books B-E*, pages 41-42. We have found that teaching text structure and mental actions contribute to students' success in reading comprehension. Use standardized end-of-year tests and end-of-year *Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale* tests as the benchmark for comprehension.

Q What is the difference between a base word and a root word?

A A base word is a unit of meaning that can stand alone but may also form other related words when affixes are added (e.g., *please, pleasant, cover, covering, recovered*). A word root is a unit of meaning derived from other languages that cannot stand alone, but is the foundation for many English words when affixes are added. ★

Eponym, Eponymy, Eponymous

New words enter our language all the time. The Earl of Sandwich, for example, is immortalized as a popular lunch item. As years go by, the derivation of added words may be forgotten, which explains the title of a clever little book creatively named *Anonyponymous: The Forgotten People Behind Everyday Words*.* An eponym is anything that is named after someone, real or fictional, intentionally or unintentionally. The author offers a mixture of eponyms, some familiar, some not. Among them: *bowdlerize, boycott, comstockery, draconian, Frisbee, galvanize, hooligan, mesmerize, Pilates, quisling, and wimp*.

Other words he assigns to an "eponym watch list," those fading away for lack of use. Among these are *baedeker, mae west, bogart* and *pinchbeck*.

This book will tell you all you want to know about these and other eponyms, and the author argues that you should want to know: "All words are abstractions. But words also have histories, and by unwinding them, we gain access to the hidden riches of our language." Enjoy.

**Anonyponymous: The Forgotten People Behind Everyday Words*, by John Bemelmans Marciano, Bloomsbury USA, New York, 2009.





Spalding Education INTERNATIONAL

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Take The Writing Road
to Reading success

Dreams Can Come True (Cont. from page 6)

school and inspire us and re-ignite the enthusiasm and love of teaching literacy that we all need to keep our students motivated and successful.

We have implemented *The Spalding Method* across our school and now have only 2 teachers who need to be trained. Our students are very proud of their

achievements. At the end of 2009 we had 26 Year 3 students (out of our original group of 37) reading at level 30. Level 30 is a reading age of 11.5 to 12.0 years and year 3 students are 8-9 years of age. The previous year we had only one! Across year 3 in 2009 we had 3 between 25 & 29, 4 between 22 & 24. (Level 22 has a reading

age of 8.5 years.) We had one on 18, (7.5 yrs), 1 on 11 who was new to the school and 2 on level 6 who are both assessed as speech and language impaired.

In the 2008 year 3 we had 1 on 30, 9 above level 24 and 18 below level 24 going as low as level 4. It is still early days for us, but we are happy with our progress so far.

Students across the school are excited about learning and classes are competing to learn the most phonograms. Children call out to me on the playground to tell me how many phonograms they know.

One Prep child excitedly ran into the classroom and said Mrs. Day, Mrs. Day, everywhere I go I see oo, oo! The bright, happy faces of children who are eager to learn is so satisfying and rewarding.

Our teachers feel happier about teaching literacy as they have a fantastic, reliable, consistent and explicit model to follow. *The Writing Road to Reading* has become our literacy bible and we are happy to recommend *The Spalding Method* to anyone who will listen. ★



SCTI Jacquie Paix teaching ILA 1 at Chatsworth School